Tents Aflame in Pearl Roundabout
March 16, 2011
Bahrainis organized sit-ins against King Hamad and the Khalifa ruling family, primarily in Manama’s main square known as the Pearl Roundabout. The monument in the middle represented the history of pearl cultivation in the Gulf. Bahraini forces burned protesters’ tents and tore down the monument because it became a symbol of the opposition.

Photograph courtesy of the Mohamed CJ/Wikimedia Commons/CC-BY-SA-3.0.

INTRODUCTION LABELS
2 B An Artist
RADZ
Stencil, April 2011
This stencil links the freedom of artistic expression with responsibility. It was painted in the early months of the 2011 Egyptian uprising when the Mubarak government attempted to stifle the opposition by censoring the media and shutting down the Internet. The move enraged the opposition and led to mass protests.

Photograph courtesy of John Woodcock.

See, Hear and Speak No Evil
Ibrahim Hamid
Mural, September 2011
In this mural, Muammar Gaddafi, Ali Abdullah Saleh and Bashar al-Assad are depicted as the proverbial “three wise monkeys.” The leaders of Libya, Yemen and Syria refuse to engage in discussions with citizens and oppositional groups. This trio was sketched on a wall in Benghazi, Libya by Ibrahim Hamid, a 22-year-old engineering student nicknamed “Benghazi’s Banksy.”

Photograph courtesy of Kelvin Brown.

Freedom
Nemo
Stencil, December 2011
The Arab World rose up in 2011 to secure a simple yet relatively indefinable goal: freedom. After decades of authoritarian rule, protesters throughout the region mobilized in the streets demanding dignity, liberty and social justice. Artists echoed the demand for freedom of life and expression without fear of censorship, arrest or incarceration.

Photograph courtesy of Nemo.

Anti-coup demonstrators
September 2013
Egyptian American protesters gathered in Washington, D.C. in September 2013 following the return of conflicts in Egypt. They wished to commemorate the deceased, support Mohammed Morsi and protest military rule, which they believe to be an illegitimate coup. Some of their symbols were repurposed from anti-coup protesters in Egypt.

Photograph courtesy of Nama Khalil.

El-Sisi Is a Joke
Nazeer
Poster, July 2013
One of the most iconic images from the 2008 U.S. presidential campaigns is remixed in this 2013 Egyptian protest poster. Deputy Prime Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is a “joke” rather than the embodiment of “hope.” The poster also criticizes American support of the Egyptian military.

Courtesy of Nazeer.

Super Morsi
Unknown artist
June 2013
Soon after Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi was elected into office, artists began ridiculing his naive politics. Here, he is depicted as an insincere superhero exclaiming in the third person, “If it happens, he will deny it.” A stereotypical Islamist politician on the left walls, “We will implement Sharia law even if we break it!”

Photograph courtesy of Nama Khalil.